

ITF

NEWS

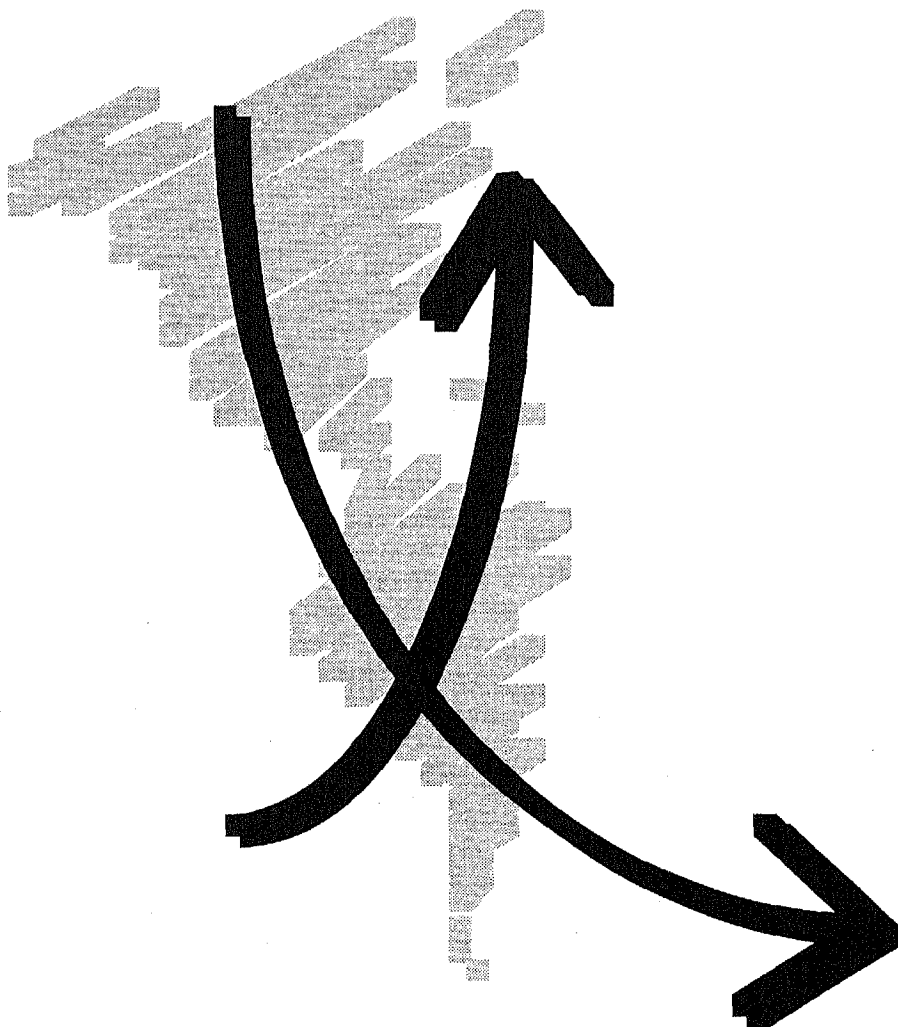
October 1996

No. 8



**INTERNATIONAL
TRANSPORT
WORKERS
FEDERATION**

**INFORMATIONS
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HOBOCTH**



**ITF Inter-American Conference
on Economic Integration**

**Making free
trade fair**

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Talking to the enemy

OPINION

ITF General Secretary David Cockroft writes



FOR those ITF unions which have experienced the harsh reality of a structural adjustment programme (SAP), the so-called Bretton Woods Institutions – the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank – are Public Enemy Number One. The remedies which they have imposed on governments as a condition for loan assistance

– devaluation, rising prices, massive cuts in public spending and the privatisation of public services – have destroyed jobs, reduced living standards and weakened trade unions.

So the idea of even talking to the people who make the decisions within those bodies is, to say the least, controversial. For nearly three years now, the ITF has contributed, together with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and a number of other International Trade Secretariats, to an office in Washington dedicated to dealing with the IMF and World Bank. One of the objectives of opening that office was to demand that they take notice of what trade unions have to say.

Now we are faced with a difficult choice. There is some evidence, at least, of a willingness to listen to trade union views. The Managing Director of the IMF, Michel Camdessus, addressed the ICFTU congress in Brussels in June. The World Bank titled its 1995 annual World Development Report "Workers in an Integrating World" and acknowledged publicly for the first time that democratic trade unions can play a positive role in industrial relations and economic development. James Wolfensohn, the President of the World Bank, has given his staff instructions to involve "civil society", including the trade union movement, in the process of developing and evaluating the bank's programmes.

Relations with the IMF, which deals with government macroeconomic policy, are primarily a matter for the ICFTU. The World Bank, on the other hand, is directly involved in implementing lending projects for structural reform in the transport sector. A simple interrogation of the bank's database on the Internet gives a list of several hundred current projects in developing countries, most of them targeted on structural reform which usually means privatisation and deregulation.

So the ITF, like the ICFTU and the other international secretariats, faces a dilemma. Do we open a dialogue with people whose ideas and actions have caused untold damage to our members? Can the ITF, for example, establish a relationship with the World Bank's transport privatisation experts without betraying its fundamental commitment to the principle of pub-

licly owned and controlled transport services?

Despite the many dangers involved, I think we have no choice. We have to attack the World Bank's policy at three levels. The first and most fundamental remains influencing national governments, which run the bank. The bulk of the voting strength lies with the rich governments of the

OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries. It is their right-wing ideology which has infected the bank. The developing country governments too have considerable power when it comes to implementing programmes. Large powerful developing countries like India and Brazil have never had any problem in telling bank officials what to do.

Secondly, there is the influence we can exert on top decision makers. Early next year, the general secretaries of the International Trade Secretariats, including myself, are planning to visit Washington DC. We shall meet with the leaders of major US unions to talk about international policy, but we shall also seek a top level meeting with James Wolfensohn and his senior advisers to put forcibly our views about what the World Bank needs to do to limit the social damage it is doing to our members.

Finally, we can do something at the technical level to limit the impact of individual national programmes on

transport workers. Earlier this year I spent some time in Washington meeting with World Bank staff active in transport. Some were considerably more open to argument than others, but all were at least prepared to listen to the trade union point of view. Of course we know we aren't going to persuade middle level bank officials that privatisation is wrong – those decisions are taken by their political masters. But maybe we can at least secure more involvement of national trade unions in the planning process, less damaging forms of privatisation or deregulation and we can limit the risks to jobs, wages and social protection and union rights.

This is not an academic question about the future. The World Bank is actively working in countries throughout the globe where the ITF has members. Ports, railways, bus and truck companies are being restructured with loans from the bank. Our unions are being excluded from the process and their members face unemployment or massive cuts in wages and benefits as a result. If the ITF can do something to help, surely we have to try. ■

'Can the ITF establish a relationship with the World Bank's transport privatisation experts without betraying its fundamental commitment to the principle of publicly owned and controlled transport services?'

£1.5 million for UN maritime body

GLOBAL ROUND-UP

■ *ITF General Secretary David Cockroft (right) hands over a cheque for £1.5 million (US\$2.3 million) to the head of the International Maritime Organization, William O'Neil. The ITF Seafarers' Trust has agreed to become a major contributor to the IMO's integrated technical co-operation programme for a three year period and the sum presented to the IMO Secretary-General at the UN body's London headquarters in September breaks down into three annual contributions of £500,000.*

The ITF has always strongly supported the work of the IMO, while being aware of the failure of some states – notably those with a flag of convenience register – to implement internationally agreed minimum standards which are laid down by the IMO.

The IMO is trying to address the problem of implementation and to this end established the Flag State Implementation Sub-Committee. The technical co-operation programme that the ITF is supporting is part of this process.

"We are currently finalising which projects will be supported," said David Cockroft. "However, I can say



that there will be projects in the African, Asia/Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe, the Caribbean and Latin American regions.

"All these projects are very different, but they include training for maritime inspectors and port state control, the implementation of search and rescue plans, and assistance for the upgrading, and training of personnel within the maritime administrations."

He added: "We hope that this contribution will demonstrate the ITF's commitment to safer seas and cleaner oceans and will encourage others in the industry to make a comparable contribution."

The ITF has insisted that none of the money it has donated should go to flag of convenience states.

ITF protest over Argentine arrests

A VIOLENT police assault on peaceful demonstrators during a 24-hour general strike in Argentina on 8 August has prompted a strong protest by the ITF to President Carlos Menem.

General Secretary David Cockroft denounced the way that truncheons, water cannons and armoured vehicles were used to disperse trade unionists organising soup kitchens for unemployed workers in five centres in Buenos Aires. The attacks were a breach of internationally recognised rights, in particular basic trade union rights laid down by the International Labour Organisation.

Among the 53 people detained for eight hours were

Juan Palacios, General Secretary of the ITF-affiliated road transport union UTA, and Victor Pistone and Raúl Cuence of the ITF Mercosur Trade Union Commission in Buenos Aires.

The strike, which was supported by all ITF affiliates, was called in protest at unemployment and hardship brought on by the government's austerity measures. Transport services were paralysed as a result, with 35 internal and domestic flights from the capital cancelled and all of the country's ports either at a standstill or working below normal capacity. ■

'Among the 53 people detained were Juan Palacios, General Secretary of the road transport union UTA, and Victor Pistone and Raúl Cuence of the ITF Mercosur office.'

Australians boycott Indonesian cargoes

■ The ITF-affiliated Maritime Union of Australia has launched a ban on Indonesian cargo and shipping in protest at the arrest of Mochtar Pakpahan, General Secretary of Indonesia's SBSI independent union, following riots in Jakarta at the end of July.

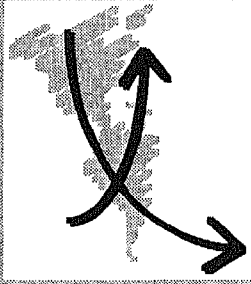
This is the second time that Pakpahan has been detained by the police. He was first arrested in November 1994 and charged with incitement to riot. He was sentenced to three years' imprisonment, but in May 1995 was released after an international outcry that included strong protests from the ITF and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

As this issue of ITF News went to press, the MUA boycott, announced in September, hit the Indonesian-flag *Bogasari Empat*, as it arrived in Fremantle to load wheat.

The SBSI, which the Indonesian government refuses to recognise, organises public transport workers, including bus, rail and some aviation workers.

The ITF is calling on the Indonesian government to drop the charges against Pakpahan and is asking all affiliates to protest to Indonesian President Suharto (fax no: +62 21 360 517).

GLOBAL ROUND-UP



At the ITF Inter-American conference on Economic Integration, Mexico City



■ Above, some of the women delegates, from left: Alejandra Barrales Magdaleno and Fabiola Samano Martinez of the Mexican cabin crew union ASSA, Olga Patricia Prieto of the Colombian seafarers' union Unimar, and Ana Lizeth Alberto of the Honduran maritime union Sindimar.



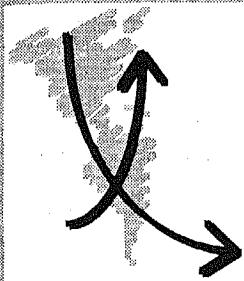
■ Left: ITF Latin American and Caribbean Regional Secretary Mauricio Sant'Anna is interviewed by media reporters.



■ Hugo Moyano, General Secretary of the Argentine truck drivers' federation.



■ ITF General Secretary David Cockroft addresses the conference. Seated right is Marcos Castro ITF Regional Vice President and President of the Argentine ship's officers' union.



Why safeguards are needed to counter free trade excesses

Unions must have a role

"What we must and do oppose is the signing of any agreement which undermines our working conditions, lowers our salaries, reduces our right to freedom of association, or exploits workers in the name of competition."

"Trade union solidarity across the region is vital if we are to win the fight for fair trade, not free trade, in the Americas."

Overleaf: Trade boom is bad news for workers

The current process of economic integration in North and South America is a disaster for workers in the transport industry, and the planned Free Trade Area of the Americas must be totally remodelled to take account of workers' interests.

Labour protection measures must be included as an integral part of all future trade liberalisation agreements, including a social clause, accompanied by sanctions which guarantee basic trade union and collective bargaining rights and minimum social standards throughout the hemisphere.

THESE were the principal conclusions of the ITF's Conference on Inter-American Economic Integration, held in Mexico City on 10 to 13 September.

The conference brought together over 120 transport union leaders from 21 countries in North and South America and the Caribbean, who are involved in the various regional trade groupings, including Nafta, Mercosur, the Andean Group, the Central American Common Market and Caricom.

José Salinas Arenas from the Mexican portworkers' union, SNA, and Alejandra Barrales Magdaleno from the cabin crew union ASSA, were among the speakers to the conference who made it clear they were not against free trade agreements contributing to a country's development.

"What we must and do oppose is the signing of any agreement which undermines our working conditions, lowers our salaries, reduces our right to freedom of association, or exploits workers in the name of competition," said Barrales.

Conference delegates heard a series of presentations made by experts in economic integration and the protection of workers' rights, including Jack Otero, former Deputy Under-Secretary of State in the US Department of Labor and Victor Tokman, Latin American Regional Director of the International Labour Office.

Otero maintained that despite the hard-fought campaign by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) to have Nafta cross-border trucking provisions re-negotiated, "unprecedented truck traffic" would begin across the US/Mexico border after the US elections in November.

"This will have major ramifications for wage rates, safety conditions, and unionisation"

warned Otero. "The liberalisation of trade and investment rules mean that it is only a matter of time until we see the emergence of transnational railroad and airline corporations that span the North American continent."

One example was the proposed acquisition of the FNM-National Railways of Mexico by Union Pacific Railways, in concert with Mexico's group CARSO, which owns the telephone company Telmex and TMM, Mexico's largest shipping company.

This move would create "a giant railroad company operating from central America through Mexico to the US", he explained.

The conference debate focused on working to get a social dimension included in the region's free trade agreements.

During the discussions it became clear that Nafta's Labor Side Agreement offers paltry protection to workers (industrial relations issues cannot act as the basis of a complaint), while other agreements, such as the Mercosur, lack any form of social protection.

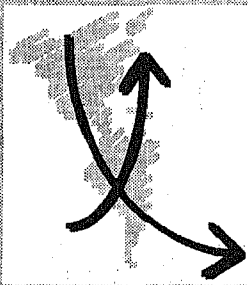
An ITF campaign should focus on the preparations by governments for a hemispheric Free Trade Area of the Americas, planned for 2005, it was agreed.

At the ITF conference, separate workshops brought together unions from the different subregions to focus on their experiences in the existing free trade areas and to put together common strategies for workers in the inland transport, maritime and aviation industries.

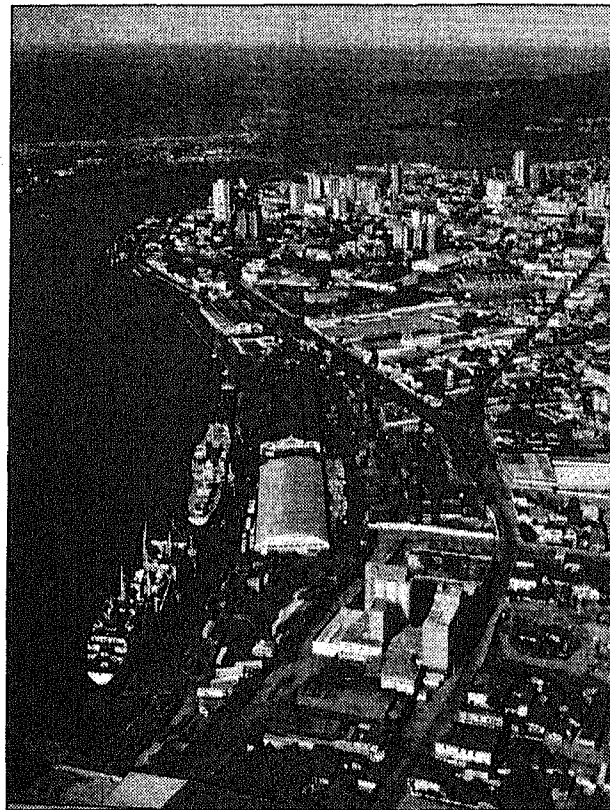
A detailed programme of campaign activity, organised in cooperation with national trade union centres and unions in other industries, was approved.

"This conference marked a further step towards the integration of ITF trade unions from the United States and Canada in a single inter-American structure with their transport worker colleagues from Latin America and the Caribbean," said General Secretary David Cockroft.

"Trade union solidarity across the region is vital if we are to win the fight for fair trade, not free trade, in the Americas," he added. ■



■ *The southern Brazilian port of Itajaí (right) is booming as a result of its strategic position close to other Mercosur member states. Will this success benefit port workers – or will they instead have to face the consequences of deregulation and privatisation?*



United States but account for only 15 per cent of total US imports.

While an increase in intra-regional trade might be seen as good news for transport workers, whose jobs depend on the movement of goods and people, it is undeniably the case that trade arrangements in the region reflect the current right-wing economic ideology.

Worldwide, the formation of regional groupings has taken place in the context of market-driven policies and is but a stage towards global free trade. Unlike the treaties establishing the European Union, however, which attempt to create a political and economic union including common social policies, Nafta and the other hemispheric agreements are based solely on the principle that free trade is intrinsically beneficial.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, workers have faced simultaneous domestic deregulation, as a consequence of so-called structural adjustment programmes imposed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund and interna-

Trade boom is bad news for the workers

tional liberalisation. Not only does the coincidence of these two processes bring major adjustments at the level of industrial enterprises, but it is highly questionable (as in the case of air transport) whether enterprises are left able to compete against their new cross-border challengers. Privatised enterprises may be bought up by outside capital (often North American, as in the case of recent Latin American port concessions and railway sell-offs) or are left vulnerable to external takeover bids, leading to capital draining from the national economy.

For North American workers, the familiar picture of economic integration is of a pool of deregulated, ever-cheaper labour in the South, meaning not only a migration to the south of employment opportunities, but the northwards movement of pressure to worsen working conditions plus an undermining of accumulated labour rights.

At first glance, it may seem that for Latin American and Caribbean workers economic integration means increased employment opportunities. However, the pay-off is a sharpening of the negative effects of free trade. Much of the new employment is in the private sector. Many of the "opportunities" are in unorganised jobs, with little or no social benefits. They rarely compensate for the loss of public sector jobs caused by economic restructuring.

So far, inter-American free trade arrangements have produced an atmosphere of uncertainty in which collective bargaining and good industrial relations have been amongst the earliest casualties. The task for the labour movement across the region is to rise to these challenges. ■

'Unlike the treaties establishing the European Union, however, which attempt to create a political and economic union including common social policies, Nafta and the other hemispheric agreements are based solely on the principle that free trade is intrinsically beneficial.'

THE 1990s have seen a huge rise in international trade within North and South America. Existing trading arrangements – the Central American Common Market, Andean Group and Caricom – and new ones, such as Nafta (North American Free Trade Agreement), Mercosur and the Group of Three, propelled by the prevailing economic liberalisation policies contributed greatly to this increase.

In North America, for example, according to the US Department of Commerce, "trade among the Nafta partners soared 17 per cent in 1994, growing over US\$ 50 billion in just one year... US merchandise exports to Canada and Mexico grew twice as fast as US exports to the rest of the world".

Except for the Mercosur countries, Bolivia and a few Caribbean states, Nafta is the largest trading partner of all countries of the Hemisphere, and of the Nafta partners, the United States is the most prominent, representing nearly 80 per cent of the combined hemispheric GDP (gross domestic product). While exports to the United States make up 52 per cent of Latin America's total exports, they represent only 13 per cent of total US imports (half of which come from Mexico). On the other hand, only 14 per cent of US exports go to Latin America.

This trend is much greater in the case of the Caribbean and Central American economies, which send over half their exports to the

THE ITF is to host a meeting of unions with members employed by the US-owned international package delivery company United Parcels Service and its subsidiaries worldwide. The meeting, which will be open to affiliates which either organise or are attempting to organise in UPS, will be held in London in February.

Participants will be able to exchange information on UPS's operating methods, its attitude to trade unions and the conditions of employ-

UPS meeting set for February

ment in different countries. The aim is also to develop an information exchange network covering unions involved with UPS.

The go-ahead for the UPS initiative came at the meeting in July of the newly formed ITF Transport Policy Group of Experts and a project group on trans-national corporations, when it was agreed to focus on so-called international integrators such as UPS, Federal Express and TNT. ■

More of the same failed remedies

"THE European Commission believes that the further introduction of market forces is the most effective means of creating a railway that can compete with other modes of transport," according to a newly published European Union (EU) White Paper, "A Strategy for Revitalising the Community's Railways".

Whether the policy paper really will contribute to the revitalisation of the railways is quite another matter, point out ITF officers who are studying its proposals.

"What the Commission is proposing is more of the same EU railway policy which has been pursued since Directive 91/440 was adopted in 1991 and which has failed to revitalise Europe's railways," says Asbjørn Wahl, ITF Inland Transport Sections' Assistant Secretary.

Indeed, the White Paper concedes that "rail's market share still declines due to dissatisfaction with price and quality of rail transport". It further warns that "there is a real possibility that rail could disappear altogether from large segments of the freight market" and that "rail transport risks entering a vicious circle, if it has not done so already".

The reason for this state of affairs, says the Commission, is that "the railways have been largely insulated from market forces" – a judgement which many rail affiliates would find surprising, reckons Wahl.

The Commission declares: "A new kind of railway is needed, it should be first and foremost a business. (...) In future the railways must behave much more like normal businesses, that endeavour to satisfy their customers' requirements in the knowledge that, if they fail to do so, someone else will and they will lose the business."

In passenger transport the White Paper hints that "mar-

ket forces could be introduced by awarding them through a Community-wide tendering process".

The big idea in this latest EU railway policy document is the creation of a number of trans-European rail freeways for freight transport, with open access and simplified arrangements. To help ensure that access rights are effective, the Commission proposes the separation of infrastructure management and transport operations into distinct business units.

On the positive side, the White Paper repeats that EU member states must fulfil their obligations to relieve their railways of debt and improve their finances.

It stresses that linking aid to restructuring programmes is not against EU regulations.

And it admits that the conditions of competition favour road transport and work against more environmentally friendly modes. Member states should therefore be allowed to redress this imbalance by supporting the railways financially.

The Commission's vision of Europe's railways looks as follows: "Some railways may focus entirely on their core business of operating trains; others may choose to enter into partnerships, for example with road hauliers or logistics companies and offer door-to-door intermodal services. Some may operate across Europe providing seamless services, while others may concentrate on local services."

The problem with this vision, says Wahl, is that it is too far removed from the reality of railway operations in Europe. ■

'In passenger transport the White Paper hints that 'market forces could be introduced by awarding them through a Community-wide tendering process'.'

European Union White Paper on the future of the railways

Action against six countries

■ European Union Directive 91/440 on the development of the EU's railways has still not been fully implemented in a number of member states, according to the European Commission. It has therefore initiated infringement proceedings against six states: Belgium, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal and Spain, mainly due to the lack of access rights for third parties on to their networks. Portugal has also not separated infrastructure management and transport operations according to the requirement of the Directive, while Greece has not notified the Commission whether the Directive has been transposed into legislation.

Deportation casebook

■ The Portuguese airline TAP left three Zaireans stranded in the transit lounge of Lisbon airport after refusing to take them on to Montreal. The passengers had valid onward tickets but incomplete travel documents. The airline would not carry them for fear of being fined by the Canadian government. In July 1991 TAP instructed check in staff to photocopy passports of passengers "especially those of black or mixed race", bound for countries with heavy carriers' liability fines.

■ Three Tamil asylum seekers arrived at Rome airport on 9 April 1990 and transferred on to a British Airways flight. Their passports and tickets were confiscated before boarding without explanation by a member of the crew. On arrival in Britain they were detained by BA staff and put back on to their Rome flight. In Rome they were arrested and put on a flight to Bombay, where two of the three were badly beaten by Indian officials.

■ In June 1996, 103 African migrant workers were deported on board a special charter flight to various African countries. All of them had been sedated to avoid possible disruption on the flight. This case led to widespread labour movement protest in Spain. In the following month the case of 16 migrant workers forced on to an Iberia flight to Equatorial Guinea received publicity after an outraged passenger used his mobile phone to ring a Spanish news agency. The deportees were bound with packing tape. The police unfairly tried to place the blame for this treatment on Iberia staff.

■ Last year the US Immigration and Naturalisation Service chartered an aircraft from American Trans Air to carry Asian deportees to their countries of origin. According to the cabin crew on board, State Department representatives instructed them to serve the entire deportee group glasses of juice containing a sedative. In another recent incident the same carrier was chartered by the US government to transport Cuban deportees from Panama to Guantanamo Bay military guards. The US cabin crew union AFA managed to get the company to agree to allow individual cabin crew members the option of not working that flight.

Air transport workers refuse role as police auxiliaries against migrants

THE forcible mass deportation of Africans who had been sheltering in sanctuary in the St Bernard Church in Paris in August 1996 has raised a number of serious international human rights issues concerning the treatment of refugees and migrant workers.

The use of what unions have called "flights of shame" to forcibly return deportees to their country of origin often handcuffed or chained has raised specific issues for civil aviation workers who are increasingly being co-opted into a kind of auxiliary police role.

The scale and violence of the St Bernard sanctuary deportations led to a major protest in France which had active union support.

French aviation unions refused to handle flights and held airport protests forcing the government to use military airports for aircraft departing with deportees. ITF civil aviation affiliates SUTAS in Senegal and UTM in Mali refused to provide ground services to any of the flights trying to enter their country, forcing at least one flight to return. The co-ordinating body of all Air Afrique unions ISTAA which provides ground handling for most of francophone Africa issued a strict instruction that no members were to handle these "shameful flights".

The French deportations received worldwide publicity, yet the passing of increasingly repressive and restrictive measures against asylum seekers and migrant workers is a trend being followed by governments in all of the industrialised countries.

Paradoxically this trend of erecting national barriers comes at a time when the same governments are aggressively promoting global liberalisation. These governments, supported by powerful international financial institutions like the IMF and the World Bank, tell us that we must knock down international borders, that we should demolish these outdated barriers against international trade and the worldwide flow of goods and services. These apparently contradictory global trends are in fact both an integral part of the globalisation of the world economy.

Transport workers know all too well that we now live in a world in which the national flag sud-

denly means nothing when a ship owner wants to register their ships in the Bahamas or Liberia to escape taxes and to crew their ships with Filipinos and Romanians unprotected by any social laws. It is a world in which airlines now tell us they are no longer flag-carriers but global airlines. They wish to provide services wherever profits are highest, without responsibility to national needs. And they wish to take their employees from wherever labour costs are cheaper.

In this globalised world a board room decision, or a commodities market gamble in one country can mean a peasant has to abandon the land thousands of miles away in another country.

It is a world in which governments offer cheap labour and repressive anti-labour laws as an incentive for transnational investment; where governments compete to exploit their workers in order to attract capital.

Globalisation has caused an international flow of workers dispossessed of the means to earn a decent living as a result of global competition and global market needs. If workers fight for their rights they are met by police frequently armed with equipment and training supplied by western countries. Trade unionists often have to escape repression across national borders.

However, for migrant workers and refugees, such as trade unionists who stand up for their rights,

Carriers' liability laws unfair to airline staff

CIVIL aviation workers find themselves caught in the front line of government policies on immigration and asylum as a result of carriers' liability laws. These laws fine airlines for every passenger who arrives at an immigration desk without a clear right of entry. An airline may be fined even if subsequently the passenger is granted the right to enter.

Amnesty International strongly opposes such laws since it is almost impossible for

a refugee fleeing persecution, not to be travelling on false documents. Carriers' liability laws pressure airlines to ensure that no passenger without proper documentation will get the chance to reach an immigration desk where they may apply for political asylum. Amnesty points out that this is a violation of the UN Convention on Refugees.

Carriers' liability laws were introduced in 1987 by Germany, Belgium and the United

Kingdom. In 1989 Denmark followed suit. By 1995 all EU member countries with the exception of Spain, Ireland and Luxembourg had passed a similar law.

In the United States, a provision on fining carriers has been part of US immigration law for more than 40 years. ■



Flights of



■ Aviation workers in the French CFDT union demonstrate against "flights of shame" calling on airlines not to lend their planes to the government for the forcible repatriation of migrant workers.

shame

the borders which are so open for trade and investment are violently slammed shut. While companies cross the world under flags of convenience, workers are stopped in the street and searched for passports and interrogated about their nationality.

These ruthless and often implicitly racist controls against workers require ever more intensive policing. Governments are trying to use civil aviation workers as part of a cheap auxiliary police force. Many countries have passed carriers' liability laws which fine airlines for carrying refugees and migrant workers if their entry status is unclear. To avoid these fines airlines now require their staff to undertake an array of duties which clearly go beyond their proper duties: check-in staff to scrutinise passports and travel documents, cabin crew to spy on suspect passengers, and ground staff to help detain them. These fines mean that airlines instruct their staff to take measures, often in vio-

'Airlines instruct their staff to take measures, often in violation of international obligations towards refugees, which aim to prevent refugees even having the chance to reach an immigration barrier.'

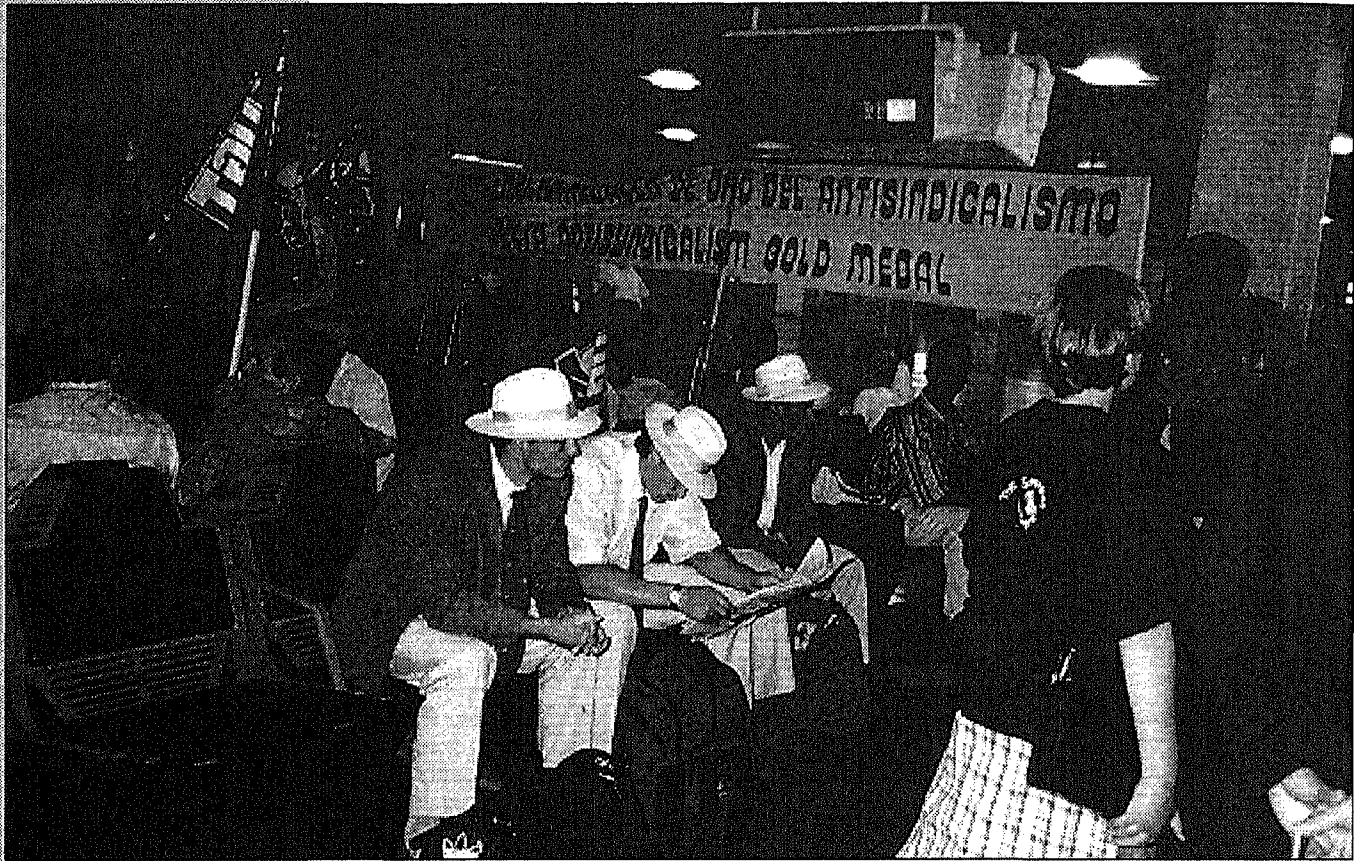
lation of international obligations towards refugees, which aim to prevent refugees even having the chance to reach an immigration barrier in order to apply for political asylum and sanctuary.

Meanwhile airline crew are required to take custody of individual deportees or to administer mass sedations to large groups of deportees without their knowledge or permission.

In 1992 the ITF Civil Aviation Section passed a resolution which called for the repeal of all carriers' liability laws and condemned "government policies and airline practices (which) are improperly pushing aviation employees into the role of policing immigration. Immigration controls are a policing matter and civil aviation workers are not, and do not seek to be policemen. Aviation employees are not, and should not be trained for such duties, nor should aviation employees be involved in any measures which jeopardise the rights of asylum seekers".

The ITF has co-ordinated closely with French and African unions who have been protesting about the St Bernard deportations. The ITF sent a protest letter to the French Prime Minister Alain Juppé which urged his government "to review its policies towards refugees and migrant workers...and to cease using civil air transport workers as auxiliaries of the police and immigration authorities in implementing its current actions of compulsory repatriation". ■

Delta's anti-unionism gold medal



■ Hopeful members of one of the Spanish Olympic team wait to board their aircraft to Atlanta between banners of the Spanish civil aviation union FETT-UGT. The banners, which surrounded the entire Delta check-in area at Madrid airport, denounced Delta as the airline without Olympic spirit, and awarded Delta a gold medal for anti-unionism.

The protest was part of worldwide activities in the week before the Olympic Games to publicise Delta as "the unsporting Olympic

Airline". Passengers were issued with ITF Delta baggage tags which explained the campaign and highlighted the anti-union attitude of Delta – which was the official airline of the Atlanta Games.

Delta recently closed all its reservations offices in Europe other than London. And Delta ground workers in Delhi lost their jobs after the airline closed its route there.

Threat to right to strike in India

■ A case involving the Indian Flight Engineers' Association (IFEA) has brought a new threat to trade union rights in India. An organisation called Common Cause filed a complaint to a special body based in Delhi called the National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (NCDRC). The complaint was concerning disruption suffered by airline passengers caused by the IFEA dispute with Air India in February 1993. In May this year NCDRC, which has mandatory powers, ruled that a fine of Rs 1 million should be paid by Air India into a Consumer Welfare Fund. The court also ruled that a similar fine of Rs 0.5 million should be paid by the union into the fund. It is difficult to understand the legal logic of this ruling. An airline ticket may be viewed as a contract between the passenger and the airline, but there is no contract between the passenger and the union.

THE Association of Flight Attendants in the United States is campaigning for legal protection for "whistle-blowers", staff who alert the authorities when the company violates safety rules.

In testimony to the US Congress AFA President Pat Friend recounted the incident of a cabin crew member who lost their job for reporting a violation of a Federal Aviation Regulation.

The incident occurred when a flight was completely full. To accommodate an additional passenger, customer service personnel requested that a five year old child ride on the parent's lap. The cabin crew protested, but the agents backed by management overruled them. One cabin crew mem-

Protect safety whistle-blowers, urges US union

ber later made an internal company report. The company subsequently reprimanded him. Dissatisfied with the company's response, he reported the incident to the FAA. The company fired him six days after he spoke to the FAA inspector. The message to other airline employees was clear: advocate safety at your own risk.

The union is campaigning for new legislation, the Avia-

tion Safety Protection Act of 1996 (HR3187) which would provide aviation workers with a complaint procedure, while at the same time protecting airlines from frivolous accusations. The law would help give cabin crew more full recognition as safety professionals. ■

Global operators and the threat to port workers

Liverpool support

■ The ITF European Regional Dockers' Section meeting in London in September expressed full support for attempts by the British Transport and General Workers' Union (BTGWU) to reopen negotiations with the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company in order to resolve a year-long dispute over the sacking of 400 dockers in Liverpool.

After hearing a report from the Liverpool shop stewards, the unions present reaffirmed their support for the strikers and made it clear that, should the company refuse meaningful negotiations with the union, this would intensify international solidarity action against shipping using the port of Liverpool.

This meeting was attended by 26 representatives of ITF-affiliated European dockworkers' unions, ITF-affiliated seafarers' and dockers' unions have already shown support for the sacked Liverpool dockers, including practical solidarity action in some countries and considerable financial contributions to the Liverpool Hardship Fund.

Baltic unions meet

■ An ITF conference of port workers' unions in the Baltic Sea countries in September called for an intensification of the cargo handling campaign in the region and for the targeting of all flag-of-convenience shipowners who refuse to sign ITF agreements.

The conference, held in Riga, Latvia, expressed support for the development of strong and independent unions in the countries of the former Soviet Union.

Throughout the world dock workers were fighting against deregulation, privatisation, casualisation, labour subcontracting and the haphazard introduction of new technology, participants noted. The conference stressed that the same problems that were faced in the region confronted dock workers' unions globally.

"This was an important and historical meeting," said ITF Dockers' Section Secretary Kees Marges afterwards. "The meeting helped to reinforce the ITF in the region and it has underlined the need for practical solidarity between dock workers in the Nordic and Baltic region."

Nineteen unions representing 40,000 port workers from Sweden, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Denmark and Norway attended the meeting.

ITF Dockers' Section Secretary Kees Marges writes...

TRANS-NATIONAL port operators and global shipping alliances are emerging at an ever-increasing pace, with worrying consequences for maritime workers worldwide.

There are many examples of the so-called global terminal operators expanding into new territory. One example is the Hong Kong-based Hutchison Whampoa, an investment holding company. Through subsidiaries, Hutchison International Ports controls or operates several terminals in the USA, Mexico and Great Britain together with many Asian ports, including Hong Kong. The recent success of a bid by Hutchison to develop and operate privatised ports on both the Pacific and Atlantic side of the Panama Canal has given the company an important strategic position.

Another trans-national is the London-based P&O, which operates, or controls through subsidiaries, such as P&O Australia, terminals in Argentina, Australia, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Russia, Great Britain and the Netherlands.

Yet another example is Manila-based International Container Terminal Services, with terminals in Mexico, Argentina, some Asian ports and the Philippines.

Global shipping alliances are not new: So-called liner conferences and other forms of co-operation have always existed. But the tendency of shipping lines to develop closer commercial relationships – for example, saving costs by sharing equipment and terminal space – is part of the trend towards closer global alliances. The spread of global shipping alliances, with the considerable influence such large groups can command, can affect port workers' employment and conditions.

Of course, many shipping lines have always had their own terminals in various ports. SeaLand is a well known example. However, global shipping alliances are now setting out to influence port operations to suit their business needs. For example, Global Alliance, a co-operation venture between American President Line, Mitsui OSK Lines, Nedlloyd, and Orient Overseas Container Lines, has recently expressed a desire to reorganise the way terminals handle its vessels in Yokohama. This could mean job losses, since, according to Global Alliance, terminal operations could be efficiently done using workers from one terminal to carry out work on neighbouring termi-

nals during idle time. Global terminal operators will compare profits of the different terminals.

If profits are increased in one terminal through cutting labour costs, local management in other terminals will be instructed to bring their financial results into line with the results of the more profitable terminal, by cutting labour costs too.

Unions will ultimately be approached to accept similar cuts. Ports and terminals without strong trade unions are thus more attractive for ship-managers and shippers than those where unions are strong enough to maintain conditions.

For example, in Hutchison's Hong Kong and Felixstowe terminals, "horizontal transport", the movement of containers in or between terminals, has been contracted out, and truck drivers (mostly owner-drivers) employed.

The subcontracted employees are not covered by provisions of the docks collective agreements and their working conditions are inferior to those of the dockers. The dockers who originally did the job have been replaced or had to accept the inferior conditions. In most cases, the new workers are casually employed.

There is no standard policy or magic formula that can be used to deal with the consequences of the reforms resulting from the influence of global terminal operators and global shipping alliances.

However, the ITF strongly believes that a coherent and common response should be developed to confront these trans-national companies in the face of deteriorating employment and working conditions.

The global company warrants a global union strategy.

● Kees Marges is asking ITF-affiliated port workers' unions to provide details of the activities of global terminal operators and global shipping alliances in their own ports. The information will be used for a research project on the social consequences of the global terminal operators which is being undertaken by the International Labour Organisation. The study was proposed by the ITF at the Tripartite ILO Meeting on the Problems caused by Structural Adjustments in the Port Industry held earlier this year.

'Global terminal operators will compare profits of the different terminals. If profits are increased in one terminal through cutting labour costs, local management in other terminals will be instructed to bring their financial results into line with the results of the more profitable terminal, by cutting labour costs too.'

Luxembourg declared a flag of convenience

LUXEMBOURG is the latest country to be added to the ITF's list of flags of convenience.

The shipping register of the land-locked European state joined the blacklist after the deadline for a deal between the Belgian shipowners and seafarers' unions expired at the end of August. Most of the vessels flying the Luxembourg flag are Belgian-controlled.

The deadline passed without an agreement in spite of attempts by the Luxembourg minister for transport to stimulate negotiations between the two sides.

Until this summer, crewing deals between the Belgian unions and shipowners secured hundreds of jobs for Belgian seafarers and provided other nationalities with the protection of ITF-approved collective agreements.

But the protocol incorporating these arrangements was terminated by the shipowners on 1 July 1996 following three months' notice. In its place the shipowners have imposed individual employment contracts incorporating cheap wages and hundreds of Belgian ratings have lost their jobs.

The ITF's Fair Practices Committee, meeting in July, passed a resolution stating that the register would be declared an FOC from 1 September 1996 unless the unions were satisfied with the conditions and arrangements applicable to the seafarers working on board Luxembourg registered vessels. The ITF is now gearing up to target Luxembourg registered vessels for boycott action.

"We have already begun the process of selecting targets," said Mark Dickinson, ITF Assistant General Secretary, "and from now on these ships are open for action by our affiliates worldwide."

The other ITF-designated flags of convenience are Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Burma, Canary Islands (Spain), Cayman Islands, Cook Islands, Cyprus, GIS (Germany), Gibraltar, Honduras, Lebanon, Liberia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Netherlands Antilles, Panama, St Vincent, Sri Lanka, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. ■

Working with IMO

■ The International Maritime Organization and the ITF are working together on a project designed to produce a manual of IMO requirements for seafarers. The project, which will be formally unveiled at the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee meeting in December, is in response to complaints that the sheer volume of regulations is too great and in a format aimed at administrators, surveyors and designers – but not seafarers.

Newspaper expose

■ The Houston Chronicle in Texas, USA, has published an excellent series of articles about the state of the global shipping industry entitled "Lost at Sea". The series, produced by Houston Chronicle journalists Jim Morris and Kevin Moran, is the result of an eight month long investigative project headed by Morris. The five part series is also available on the Internet World-Wide Web (<http://www.chron.com/content/interactive/social/maritime/index.html>) or you can get to the pages from a link in the ITF's World-Wide Web home page (<http://www.itf.org.uk>).

Advice line

■ The ITF is helping to fund a new confidential telephone information service for seafarers who want advice on welfare benefits and medical treatment in the United Kingdom. The Seafarers' Benefits Advice Line, which was launched in September, is being operated by the Seamen's Hospital Society, a charity which provides financial help to seafarers and which assists in the provision of free hospital facilities for seafarers in Britain. The advice line number is (from within the UK) either 0345-413 318 or 0181-850 0910.

ITF funds research to find out how the Internet could be of help

A CAREER at sea is one of the loneliest occupations in the world but it could become less isolated if seafarers could log on to the Internet, the computerised global information network, according to researchers at the University of Wales, in Cardiff.

The academics are concerned that, whilst the public at large are taking advantage of the information superhighway, seafarers throughout the world are still restricted to the "information wilderness".

The university is therefore looking at how the Internet could help seafarers feel less isolated while they are at sea by giving them the means to keep in touch with their families and other seafarers.

The university's Department of Maritime Studies and International Transport is keen to hear from seafarers, as well as communications experts and product suppliers, who may also have an interest in this area.

The researchers have already been awarded UK£30,000 (US\$45,000)

Surfing on the high seas a cure for loneliness?

funding from the ITF to conduct a feasibility study into using the Internet to improve the welfare of seafarers.

During the last two years, the number of regular users of the Internet has risen to an estimated 30 million worldwide, enabling people and companies to keep in touch regardless of location or time.

"Surfing" the Internet has become a popular pastime for millions of people with access to a computer linked to the telephone system.

For seafarers, the potential applications are widespread and could include:

● electronic mail facilities

for seafarers between the ship and their home, or even between ships,

- an up-to-date information source for seafarers on health and welfare issues available 24 hours a day,
- a general seafarers' information service,
- an Internet magazine run by seafarers for their colleagues,
- access to electronic newspapers, sport and recreational information,
- access to educational services to allow seafarers to develop professional skills and qualifications.

A key component in seafarers being able to use the Internet is the communications link. The study will therefore consider the possible use of present and future satellite links and alternative ways of making Internet information available. ■

Any seafarer wanting a copy of the research questionnaire can get it from the ITF's World-Wide Web page (<http://www.itf.org.uk>) or direct from the university (parfett@cardiff.ac.uk).

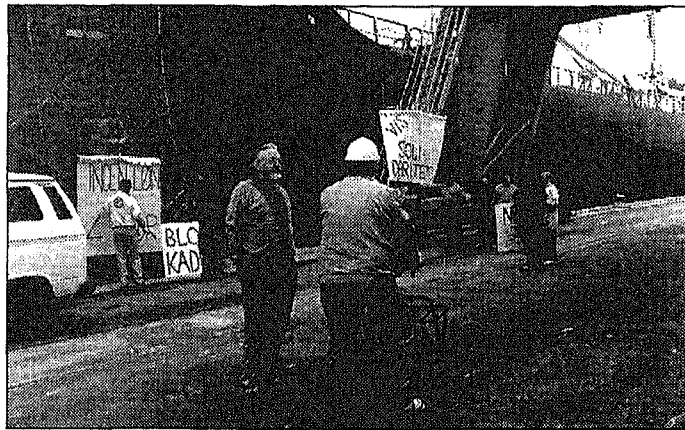
FOC campaign round-up

Danish blockade wins \$384,003

WHEN the Panamanian-flag *Daria I* called at the Danish port of Fredericia to load fertiliser to take to China, ITF Inspector Kjartan Gudmundsson inspected the vessel and found that crew wages were far below the International Labour Organisation minimum and that the seafarers on board had not received any wages for four months.

Gudmundsson contacted the Greek owner, Transorient Overseas, of Piraeus, a subsidiary of the Ukrainian-owned Transblasco, and demanded that an ITF standard agreement be signed.

After the owner refused, trade union activists (supporters of the flag of convenience campaign in Den-



■ The *Daria 1* blockaded in Fredericia.

mark) blockaded the vessel. After two days a representative of the owners flew in and an ITF agreement was signed, backdated six months to when they had signed on.

After two more days of ac-

tion the crew were paid the total amount of US\$384,003 in cash. Having received their money 15 of the crew wanted to be repatriated, and a few days later they were on their way home at the owner's expense. ■

Monthly basic was \$249



■ The Panamanian-flag *Polaris S* berthed at Århus, Denmark, where ITF Co-ordinator John Jacobsen secured US\$166,468 in back pay for the crew 24 Greek, Indian and Pakistani seafarers in August. Jacobsen found that an able seaman's basic monthly wage paid by owner Nirvana Compania, of Piraeus, Greece, was \$249, with overtime at \$1.40 an hour.

Victory for Russians in four-month strike

A FOUR-MONTH strike by the crew of the Russian-flag *Volgo Balt 114* in the Danish port of Køge ended in July after the employer finally paid in full the wages owed to them.

The seafarers went on strike because they had not been paid for three months. They contacted ITF Inspector Kjartan Gudmundsson who, together with local dockers and trade unions, organised a support campaign. This ensured that the crew were kept supplied with essentials and their spirits kept high. "Even at the end of the strike the refrigerator was far from empty," said Gudmundsson.

After the Russian charterer of the vessel, Liberty Star Shipping, had been declared insolvent, and after the Danish dockers refused to discharge the cargo of 1,200 tonnes of road salt, the Russian shipowner, North Western Shipping, finally decided to pay the outstanding wages, a total of US\$36,321. ■

Back pay for Indonesians

TWELVE Indonesian seafarers on the Japanese-owned, Panama-flag *Peacock* went on strike in Cairns, Australia, in August over unpaid wages and as a result won over US\$62,000 which was negotiated for them by the local ITF representative. ■

Back pay for East Europeans in Sri Lanka

■ The crews of three East European ships, two Romanian-flag and one Russian-registered, which docked in Colombo, Sri Lanka, this summer have ITF Inspector Camillus Fernando to thank for recovering backpay owed to them.

The 22 Romanian seafarers on the *Felicioara* shared US\$76,482 after Fernando threatened to have the ship arrested unless the Romanian owners handed over the five months of wages which they had not received.

Meanwhile, the 17-strong crew of the *Nicoreski* have shared over \$20,000 for two months wages which were outstanding.

And the 26 Russian seafarers on the *Primorsk*, owned by Baltic Shipping, received \$100,000 between them and were promised the remaining 30 per cent of the wages owed to them on their return to St Petersburg.



■ A group of ITF Inspectors at the seminar did some ship visiting while in New Orleans. Pictured from left are Tony Sasso (Fort Lauderdale), Robert Mitchell (Houston), Jack Heyman (San Francisco) and Burrill Hatch (Seattle).

Seminar puts new impetus into North America campaign

ITF INSPECTORS based in North America participated in the first ever regional seminar in July. Fifteen inspectors from the USA and Canada and representatives of the ITF Secretariat met in New Orleans for six days of intensive discussion and learning.

The seminar programme covered three days of policy discussion, and three days of practical training on the ITF vessel system and related computer programmes. Policy items included discussion on the importance of building alliances with port chaplains, the police, customs officials and others in ports; the problems of working with particularly oppressed groups of seafarers who might be most vulnerable to victimisation as a consequence of union involvement; and the complexities of dealing with abandoned seafarers.

The implications of decisions of the most recent Fair Practices Committee meeting were also discussed. Valuable input on the US Coast Guard's activities was provided by a local representative, and a rep-

resentative of a local legal firm assisted by outlining various legal issues to be taken note of by Inspectors.

The Inspectors present included those operating in three new port areas for the ITF – San Francisco, Miami, and Portland. They also included representatives of an important new development in North America – that five inspectors now come from the unions representing long-shoremen.

According to Mark Dickinson, ITF Assistant General Secretary, the significance of the seminar lay not just in the fact that it was the first for North America, but more importantly that it represented the consolidation of both the expansion of the campaign into new ports, as well as the strengthening and deepening of the campaign through the increased involvement of dock workers' unions.

"All delegates went away from New Orleans with a greater sense of purpose and a commitment to intensifying the campaign in all quarters," he said. ■

"All delegates went away from New Orleans with a greater sense of purpose and commitment."

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10 YEARS AGO

ITF News,
October 1986

Deregulation's true face

THE deregulation dream turned sour for Donald Burr and People's Express airline this month – once the fastest expanding airline in the world.

People's Express appeared to be a classic illustration of the "benefits" of deregulation – offering more choice and lower prices to the consumer. But time has shown the People's Express promise to be hollow and fleeting.

Caught up in the desperate economics of unfettered competition, the US airline had to expand at an ever increasing rate to remain in the game. Their network expanded to include transatlantic and West Coast flights, but the company's fragile infrastructure and cramped home base at Newark, New Jersey, couldn't cope. The final leap – the acquisition of the ailing Denver-based Frontier Airlines – was a bid to establish People's Express as a big league national carrier.

But the Frontier takeover proved to be too big a bite to swallow for the company,

whose administrative structure just wasn't capable of handling the size of operations.

Now People's Express have bitten the bullet and agreed to sell what's left of the entire company to Texas Air for scant US\$120 million – barely the market value of the airline's stock.

Texas Air already has an offer on the table for Eastern Airlines – which still requires government approval. They already own New York Air in the east and Continental Airlines in Denver. When the dust has settled, the USA will be left with the new Texas Air group, United Airlines and American Airlines as the three predominant domestic carriers.

All the fine sounding promises of deregulation have resulted in, then, is a greater concentration of ownership than ever before. So much for consumer choice and diversity. ■

Forthcoming ITF meetings

- *Flag of Convenience Seminar, Istanbul, 1-4 October*
- *Education Working Party, London, 22 October*
- *Management Committee, London, 23 October*
- *Executive Board, London, 24-25 October*
- *ITF Seafarers' Trust, London, 26 October*
- *South-East Asia Sub-Regional Seminar, Singapore, 5-7 November*
- *Civil Aviation Section Committee, London, 12-14 November*
- *Latin American Dockers' Conference, Lima, 25-26 November*
- *African Regional Civil Aviation Conference, Lomé, 26-28 November*
- *Latin American Flag of Convenience Seminar, Lima, 27-30 November*

20 YEARS AGO

ITF News,
October 1976

First ever agreement for taxi drivers

THE ITF-affiliated Luxembourg Federation of Railway and Transport Workers has negotiated its first ever agreement for taxi drivers, thus bringing to a successful conclusion years of effort to bring this last group of road transport workers under the collective bargaining umbrella.

The agreement, which came into effect at the beginning of this month, limits maximum daily working hours to nine and a half (48 hours a week), while stipulating daily and weekly rest periods of 12 and

36 hours respectively. It also secures for taxi drivers a guaranteed monthly minimum income based on length of service. (On an index figure of 268.19, this amounts to 18,036 francs after one year's service, rising to 32,572 francs after 25 years.)

It has unfortunately proved impossible to introduce a new salary system. Earnings remain related to takings (33 to 36 per cent). ■

ITF NEWS

Please note that the English language version of ITF News is the first of the various language editions to be published. Affiliated unions who are on the mailing list to receive non-English editions can also be sent an advance copy or copies in English in order to familiarise

themselves with the stories to appear in their translated edition. In addition, unions can, on request, be sent advance pages of the English language ITF News by fax or electronic mail if required for translation or other immediate use.

Requests to be placed on the English language mailing list should be sent to the ITF Communications Department. See opposite for head office details.

**FROM THE
LABOUR PRESS**

**The Canadian
Sailor/Le Marin
Canadien
Seafarers'
International
Union of
Canada/
Syndicat
International
des Marins
Canadiens**

'When we descended into the ship's hold, crew members rushed forward and held up decaying food. The cook lifted a plastic wrapping to show mouldy pitta bread purchased five months before in Syria.'

**Montreal-based ITF Inspector
Jim Given writes:**

ROTTING oranges sprawled sparsely across a shelf in the ship's hold, a wooden box of sardines squashed into a paste-like condition and covered in mould were among the items found on the Panamanian-flag *Blue Bay* when we inspected her in Hamilton.

The crew complained to the harbour master about rotting food, long work days and delayed payment of wages. The harbour master then contacted the ITF in Montreal and asked us to intervene on behalf of the crew.

When we descended into the ship's hold, crew members rushed forward and held up decaying food. The cook lifted a plastic wrapping to show mouldy pitta bread purchased five months before in Syria. The cook told us that he had to buy oranges with cigarettes. He also showed us eggs he claimed were black inside. Stagnant and foul-smelling water gathered in the storage areas was a perpetual problem, the crew said.

When we questioned the captain about these conditions, he simply stated: "I am the captain not the cook. The cook prepares the food." We contacted port state control who inspected and issued a warning to dispose of the rotting food or be detained.

One crew member close to tears said his only demand was to get back to Syria to be with his wife and infant daughter. Other crew members showed concern that their wages were below the minimum International Labour Organisation rates.

After several days of negotiation and the threat of strike action by the crew, the company agreed to all crew demands and sent them home with full wages. The total settlement was in excess of US\$40,000. ■

FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE
DES OUVRIERS DU TRANSPORT

FEDERACIÓN INTERNACIONAL
DE LOS TRABAJADORES DEL TRANSPORT

INTERNATIONELLA
TRANSPORTARBETAREFEDERATIONEN

国際運輸労連

INTERNATIONALE
TRANSPORTARBEITER-FÖDERATION

МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ФЕДЕРАЦИЯ
ТРАНСПОРТНИКОВ

